**Jamie Mackay**

Could you introduce yourself and say a little about your arts education context?

**Penny Chivas (she/her)**

Yeah, so my name is Penny Chivas. I'm a dance artist based in Glasgow, and I work as a performer, as a collaborator, but also in varying, let's say, arts facilitation settings sessions, and both in sort of professional dance contexts, also in community and also in inclusive practice. I've always been very interested in kind of the social well-being that that dance can support.

**Jamie Mackay**

So can you say a little bit why, you applied for the MEd programme?

**Penny Chivas (she/her)**

Yeah. So, I graduated, I did my bachelor of dance, and then I did honours. And then, so there was about 15 years since I graduated from my undergrad, and I felt a certain point in my career that I needed to reinvigorate, to learn more. But also it felt important to, you know, for lack of better words, to get more letters after my name. I feel within the sector, I'm quite experienced, and I wanted that experience to be to be recognised alongside being challenged about the information that I already knew.

**Jamie Mackay**

And could you describe your journey through the MEd?

**Penny Chivas (she/her)**

Yeah. So, I first started now was really very interested in somatic practices, and how they could support people. But through the MEd I actually started writing a lot about climate change, and I made my work ‘Burnt Out’, which has been, it's been touring internationally for the last 3 years. That's about the Australian bushfires. It went on to get Creative Scotland touring, funding for theatre and dance, and that came out of writing that I made from the Context and Culture sort of a kind of background to an arts practice. And then for I was, gonna say, the final year. And I think also what I really enjoyed, was talking to classmates along the way, and just hearing their journeys through different art forms. I feel as a dance artist it is very easy to get in touch with other dance artists, but less so in terms of you know, hearing what the burning questions are in music or in drama, that felt really important.

**Jamie Mackay**

So, yeah, what did you focus on then, specifically in your Final Project?

**Penny Chivas (she/her)**

Yes, I my final year project, it was a completely academic piece around ecopedagogy, and I unpicked the Scottish Government's Net Zero Nation policy and looked at how the climate crisis has been engaged with in arts practices in the UK since 2019, which was the year that Scotland declared a climate emergency. And I was really interested if I could do the research that I could use later on to make more artwork, but to also understand what else needs to be around those situations. So, and covered things around climate anxiety, also touched upon things around climate justice, the importance of working locally. There's still a lot that needs to be uncovered, but I feel like I have a grounding that I can then reach towards other people that I need to fill the gaps with.

**Jamie Mackay**

So what impact did this have on your practices as an arts educator?

**Penny Chivas (she/her)**

Quite a significant impact, really. First off Creative Scotland got in touch and tried to get me to apply for the Climate Emergency Lead at Creative Scotland, which is quite an amazing thing for them to go and ask me to apply. But I didn't. I put in for the for the touring funding for my work ‘Burnt Out’ which really, it's still touring at the moment across Scotland, but because of the Final Project, the work ends with a post-show discussion. Someone locally comes on stage with me, and that feels really important because it not only is about climate change, but it's began to touch upon anti-racism issues, climate anxiety. It's touched upon working class areas of Glasgow. I really feel like it's making, supporting art to make connections with these major issues that we are facing at the moment in Scotland. It's also supported me to work with a sustainability advisor on my tour, so began to work through the Theatre Green Book as someone, as a collaborator on the team rather than the person delivering it, and because of that, then suddenly, I'm getting these kind of guest teaching roles, talking about the Theatre Green Book and how to apply it, which I wouldn't get if I didn't have an arts practice beforehand, so that only works if I've had a working background, touring and performing in work to understand how to join these dots, so the education side, with my performance side coming together.

**Jamie Mackay**

I mean, you may well have answered this already, but what changed as a result of you studying the MEd?

**Penny Chivas (she/her)**

What has changed? So, you know definitely, I went back to Australia in January, and I taught on the pre-professional year at Sydney Dance Company, which is quite a prestigious training course within Australia. They were definitely impressed that I had the MEd from the Conservatoire, which helped me get more work that way. I've also found overseas as well, that it’s been very useful getting work with dance company Spin in Sweden, an inclusive dance company over there, that they thought highly of this. My second year project was about, here I go again, was about proprioception, but actually in hindsight that taught me a lot about inclusive dance practice. Which has really supported, how I work and how I can get work. Because that's a that's a burning question as a freelance dance artist - generating enough income. And yeah, I think that's it

**Jamie Mackay**

Thanks, Penny.